

## Message Text

PAGE 01     MANAMA 02206 281634Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----281648Z 011770 /44

O P 281313Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 4014 IMMEDIATE  
INFO CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK PRIORITY 338  
COMIDEASTFOR PRIORITY

S E C R E T   MANAMA 2206 SECTION 1 OF 2

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDESS HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS     : PFOR,BA, US  
SUBJECT   : MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS: MEETING WITH FOREIGN  
           MINISTER

REF     : MANAMA 1941

1. SUMMARY - FOREIGN MINISTER RECEIVED ME DEC. 28 IN PLACE OF PRIME MINISTER, WITH WHOM APPOINTMENT HAD BEEN REQUESTED AND CONFIRMED EARLIER. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID MY DEMARCHE OF NOV 20 (REFTEL) HAD BEEN GIVEN MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BUT THAT GOB HAS CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS NOTHING SUFFICIENTLY NEW IN SITUATION TO JUSTIFY CHANGE AT THIS TIME IN PREVIOUS GOB DECISION THAT MIDEASTFOR SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN JUNE 30, 1977. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT GOB REMAINS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF CONTINUING US NAVY USE OF BAHRAIN BUT THAT SUCH DISCUSSIONS MUST BE ABOUT SPECIFICS AND MUST INCLUDE (A) USG WILLINGNESS ASSIST IN EXPANSION OF BDF AND (B) "NEW FORMULA" WHICH WOULD CHANGE STATUS OF NAVY HERE IN WAY WHICH WILL SPREAD POLITICAL BURDEN AMONG OTHER AREA STATES. HE SAID BAHRAIN, LIKE REST OF WORLD, WOULD WAIT FOR NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION BEFORE MAKING MAJOR DECISIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THINGS SAID IN "CHATS" BETWEEN AMBASSADOR TWINAM OR ADMIRAL BIGLEY AND PRIME MINISTER OF DEFENSE MINISTER HAD BEEN TAKEN AS STATEMENTS OF SECRET

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GOB POLICY OR INTENTIONS, WHICH IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE ARTICULATED ONLY THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE SPOKE CONFIDENTLY, AS USUAL, AND STRESSED THAT ON THIS OCCASION, AS IN PAST, HE AS FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSES FOREIGN POLICY OF AMIR AND OF GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. ARRIVING AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE FOR DEC 28 APPOINTMENT WITH PRIME MINISTER WHICH I HAD REQUESTED, PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY INFORMED ME THAT PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAD DECIDED THAT

LATTER WOULD RECEIVE ME. AFTER OPENING PLEASANTRIES, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT MY NOV 20 DEMARCHE TO PRIME MINISTER (REFTEL) HAD BEEN GIVEN MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BUT THAT, UNLESS I HAD SOMETHING NEW TO ADD, GOB HAS CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT REASON AT THIS TIME TO CHANGE PREVIOUS GOB DECISION THAT MIDEASTFOR SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN JUNE 30, 1977. HE WENT ON AT LENGTH TO POINT OUT THAT HE HAD BEEN TELLING USG FOR THREE YEARS OR MORE THAT A "NEW FORMULA" MUST BE FOUND TO JUSTIFY NAVY'S PRESENCE HERE. WHILE EXPANSION OF UNILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IS ONE ELEMENT OF SUCH A FORMULA, AND ONE TO WHICH USG ONLY LATELY HAS BEGUN TO GIVE SOME ATTENTION, OTHER ELEMENTS, MOST PARTICULARLY NEED FOR OTHERS TO SHARE POLITICAL BURDEN OF A "FOREIGN BASE," HAVE ALSO BEEN STRESSED BY FOREIGN MINISTER BUT HAVE RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM U. S. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE HAD MADE THESE POINTS IN NEW YORK TO ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON BUT, NEVERTHELESS, SOON THEREAFTER DEP SEC DEF CLEMENTS HAD ARRIVED HERE "DEMANDING" A THREE-YEAR EXTENSION WITHOUT ADDRESSING IN ANY WAY NEED FOR NEW FORMULA.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUED THAT OUR WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE TO HELP BDF EXPANSION IS APPRECIATED BUT THAT IT WILL NOT JUSTIFY KEEPING MIDEASTFOR IN ITS PRESENT FORM, WHICH MUST BE CHANGED. HE SAID THAT MODERNIZATION OF BDF IS IMPORTANT, PARTICULARLY TO CROWN PRINCE/DEFENSE MINISTER, BUT THAT USG ASSISTANCE TO BDF WOULD NOT EASE FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS WHICH MIDEASTFOR RAISES FOR BAHRAIN. THIS CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MAJOR CHANGES IN NATURE OF NAVY  
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PRESENCE HERE, CHANGES WHICH OTHERS IN AREA AND BEYOND WILL SEE AND UNDERSTAND AS BEING THE END OF "FOREIGN BASE" IN BAHRAIN. IN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEW THIS CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY HAVING AMERICA'S OTHER FRIENDS IN AREA ALSO HOST NAVY SHIPS.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD GROWN FRUSTRATED AT USG'S SEEMING "DEAFNESS" TO HIS OFTEN-EXPRESSED NEED FOR NEW FORMULA OF KIND HEHAD JUST DESCRIBED. INSTEAD, USG SEEMED TO RESPOND, AND THEN VERY SLOWLY, ONLY TO PURELY BILATERAL ASPECTS OF SITUATION. HE ADDED THAT BAHRAIN CERTAINLY DID NOT NEED OR WANT MORE RENT MONEY AND ADDITIONAL "RENT" IN THE FORM OF U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN BDF INVENTORY WOULD NOT SOLVE BAHRAIN'S FOREIGN PLOICY PROBLEMS AND THEREFOR, WOULD NOT JUSTIFY CONTINUATION OF MIDEASTFOR IN ITS PRESENT FORM. FOREIGN MINISTER WONDERED WHY USG HAD GAINED IDEA THAT IT WOULD AND WHY USG PRESSING HARD NOW FOR UNILATERAL GOB DECISION WITHOUT ADDRESSING IN SPECIFIC WAYS BAHRAIN'S NEED FOR TOTALLY NEW APPROACH.

5. I REPLIED, FIRST, BY REVIEWING NEGOTIATION RECORD TO MAKE POINT THAT REOPENING OF ISSUE OF MIDEASTFOR TENURE HAD BEEN AT FORMAL INITIATIVE OF PRIME MINISTER WITH ADMIRAL BIGLEY AND WITH AMBASSADOR TWINAM. CROWN PRINCE/DEFENSE MINISTER HAD ALSO PLAYED A ROLE

AT THAT TIME. USG HAD RIGHTFULLY GAINED IMPRESSION FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS THAT RECONSIDERATION OF TENURE ISSUE WAS POSSIBLE AND THAT KEY ELEMENT WOULD BE USG WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST BDF IN SOME WAY IN ITS EXPANSION PROGRAM. AT THAT TIME WE HAD ALREADY AGREED TO CONDUCT HELICOPTER SURVEY AND, LATER, HAD CONDUCTED COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BDF'S TOTAL NEEDS. IN SHORT, WE HAD RESPONDED TO GOB INITIATIVE WITH SOME PRACTICAL MEASURES AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, AS I HAD SAID DURING MY NOV 20 PRESENTATION TO PRIME MINISTER, WE HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO ASSIST IN BDF MODERNIZATION.

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-----281717Z 012122 /44

O P 281313Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4015  
INFO CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK PRIORITY 339  
COMIDEASTFOR PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAMA 2206

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDESS HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS : PFOR, BA, US  
SUBJECT : MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS: MEETING WITH FOREIGN  
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6. CONTINUING, I SAID THAT CHIEF PURPOSE OF MY NOV 20 DEMARCHE HAD BEEN TO CONFIRM TO THE GOB OUR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE AHEAD IN EXPANDING OUR RELATIONSHIP AND, FOR REASONS OF TIMING, TO REQUEST THAT GOB LIFT THE WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE IN ORDER FOR BOTH OUR GOVERNMENTS TO HAVE TIME TO CONSIDER NEW APPROACHES WITHOUT, AT SAME TIME, PUSHING WITHDRAWAL PROCESS BEYOND POINT OF NO RETURN. I REVIEWED FOR FOREIGN MINISTER POINT I HAD MADE TO PRIME MINISTER, AGAIN LAYING PARTICULAR STRESS ON AWKWARD JUXTAPOSITION OF BDF SURVEY, NAVY WITHDRAWAL DATE, AND ADVENT OF NEW ADMINISTRATION

I ADDED THAT PRIME MINISTER CERTAINLY SEEMED AT THE TIME TO AGREE WITH OUR ANALYSIS THAT PROBLEM WAS NOT ONE OF MUTUAL WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE NEW APPROACHES BUT, RATHER, ONE IN WHICH BOTH OUR INTERESTS MIGHT BE DAMAGED IF SITUATION ALLOWED TO DRIFT WITHOUT ADJUSTMENTS FOR CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES.

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7. FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED BY BRUSHING ASIDE TIMING PROBLEM. HE SAID THAT WHILE WORLD IS WAITING FOR PROGRAMS AND DECISIONS OF NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND IN MATTER AS IMPORTANT AS THIS ONE IS TO BAHRAIN, GOB FELT IT TOO SHOULD WAIT. FOREIGN MINISTER DISCOUNTED POSSIBILITY THAT WITHDRAWAL PROCESS WOULD GO BEYOND POINT OF NO RETURN BEFORE NEW ADMINISTRATION COULD OPEN DISCUSSIONS ON SPECIFICS OF A NEW FORMULA. HE SAID HE FELT THAT BY MARCH OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL HAVE HAD TIME EITHER TO REACH AGREEMENT ON NEW FORMULA OR COME TO CONCLUSION THAT WE COULD NOT AGREE. IN EITHER CASE, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE BELIEVED THERE WOULD BE AMPLE TIME EITHER TO ESTABLISH SOME NEW KIND OF NAVY PRESENCE ON WHICH WE MIGHT AGREE OF FOR NAVY TO COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL BY JUNE 30 DEADLINE.

8. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN TURNED TO QUESTION OF WHO SPEAKS FOR GOB IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE SAID HE COULD NOT AGREE THAT TALKS LAST JUNE BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND ADMIRAL BIGLEY AND AMBASSADOR TWINAM COULD BE CONSIDERED AS "OFFICIAL" THEY WERE ONLY "CHATS" AND SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED OTHERWISE BY USG, AT LEAST NOT WITHOUT CHECKING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT OFFICIAL STANDING OF THINGS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAID. THIS HAD NOT BEEN DONE AND IT WAS UNFORTUNATE SINCE, IF USG HAD RAISED CONTENTS OF THESE "CHATS" WITH HIM AT THE TIME, WE WOULD HAVE LEARNED THAT A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE NATURE OF NAVY PRESENCE WOULD NOT JUSTIFY MIDEASTFOR EXTENSION. FOREIGN MINISTER INDICATED THAT THIS WAS REASON FOR HIS RECEIVING ME ON THIS OCCASION INSTEAD OF PRIME MINISTER. HE CONTINUED THAT ISSUES OF THIS KIND SHOULD ALWAYS BE HANDLED THROUGH HIM, AND THAT ON THIS AS ON PAST OCCASIONS DEALING WITH MIDEASTFOR HE EXPRESSES POLICY OF AMIR AND OF GOVERNMENT.

9. FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSED THAT HE WANTED WASHINGTON TO BE CLEAR ON BASIC POINT: THAT MIDEASTFOR TENURE ISSUE REMAINS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AND THAT DISCUSSION MUST INCLUDE NOT ONLY  
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BILATERAL ELEMENTS BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY IN HIS VIEW, SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH POLITICAL BURDEN OF MIDEASTFOR CAN BE SPREAD AMONG OTHER AREA STATES.

10. COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.  
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